



SEFER 1991

A faint, light gray watermark of a classical building's facade is visible in the background. It features four prominent columns supporting a triangular pediment.

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# **Sefer**

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According to the Analytical Concordance of the Bible, the meaning of sefer or sepher is derived from the Hebrew, meaning writing or book.

Cover Art - "Subjunctive Apotheosis" by  
**Brett Hartman**

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9200 University Blvd.  
P.O. Box 10087  
Charleston, SC 29411  
803-863-8042

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An eaglet, soft and downy,  
stood ready to fly.  
The wind ruffled its new feathers,  
wings stretched towards the unknown.

A sigh, a glance,  
the eaglet leaped into the air,  
feeling the experience of freedom,  
seeing the world in new perspective.

Unknowing to the young bird,  
an eagle sat staring, watching,  
eyes full of pride, of love.

Many times the nest had shaken,  
faltered, wavered in the storms  
full of intensity and aches.  
However, the nest stood strong  
under the shadow of the eagle,  
as it has and will do.

Eyes full of pride,  
the eagle watched its child,  
the last of its hatchlings,  
watched as it took to flight  
and to travel the untraveled.

The eaglet soared higher and higher,  
gaining new height.  
But the higher it soared,  
the harder it fell,  
plummetting to the earth.

Each time the eaglet fell  
the eagle was there to bear it up  
to the nest, safe and secure.

The eagle, so special,  
such a very special creature,

was a mother.  
However, this mother, this high soaring eagle,  
was unlike any other,  
for she is my mother,  
my eagle.

Thomas Ayers

From days of dreams,  
of enchantment, of life as it moves  
into those of cold, dark desolation.  
The flowers wilt and disappear.  
Beauty falls to changing colors and  
changing times.  
Dark, desolate the land seems as that  
of beauty, of love is swept away into  
the sands of time and change.  
But from the darkest hour arises new  
hope, as the last sands of the year  
spill and fade before those of the  
new.  
For with the new comes new hope and  
beauty - life shall reign again. A  
new seed, a new bud, a new blossom  
and flower of love shall arise from  
the old, the uns forsaken love of a  
heart. True through the times of  
easy swaying, calm and strong through  
the pain.  
Lonely and desolate except for a seed,  
nurturing and growing, fueled by the  
thought of a reencounter with a  
goddess, the very essence and soul  
of the seed. The seed of life and  
of love for those of the dark and  
desolate.

The Lonely.

Thomas Ayers

A cool day with summer breeze,  
gull's lift on thermal's gentle might,  
waves crashing, spray falling;  
showering those with love.

Sirens sing as ships pass  
sailors longing for home,  
gulls call as maidens wait;  
wishing their love home.

Sun setting, Dusk is coming,  
horizon, red and bright.  
A ship is seen, silhouetted against the sky.  
Coming home,

Coming home.

The mast, the stern,  
a ship coming into view.  
On the bow, standing proud  
a lone sailor,  
standing against the world.  
He is coming home.

Walking the beach,  
footprints left behind,  
a maiden, so many times before, stands  
waiting and watching.  
Sirens stop, a white dove flies,  
a signal of coming happiness.

A figure seen,  
white, long flowing hair.  
A sailor's heart, proud and humble,  
sees the figure stand.

Waves crash, spray showers,  
a man spots his love.  
An eagle soars, spirits rise,  
a sailor feels a moment of flight.

Cold, icy, strong to all depths unseen;

those arms welcome the sailor.  
Love happiness, passion, desire;  
drive his arms.  
Push him, drive him,  
his goal is within his grasp.  
The sirens begin to sing.

Darkness,  
He falters, his goal disappears.  
Darkness, vanishing air,  
sinking to depths unknown.  
The song, the death song;  
the sirens continue to sing.  
So many men the song has claimed,  
lost to that beautiful song.

An eruption, an explosion.  
Love.

He conquered, he survived,  
he rises out of the foam  
calling that sweet name.

A turning, joyous steps  
reunited in body only,  
for spirit and heart were always one.

Waves crash, foam rushes  
the spray showers its love.  
The sirens song, forever gone,  
could not conquer this sailor's  
Love.

Thomas Ayers

### Progression

A dreary day gathered on the east side of town,  
Toning the geometrics into soft gray mass;  
Low  
Like the fog over beach,  
The sound of muffled breaks of beach,  
setting free the organics,  
Power,  
The soft gray mass moves o'er all,  
Consuming,  
One more to the ground,  
One more the earth—back to whence it came—  
And then washed it away.

Paul L. Capps

### Friendship

A song was heard in the distance,  
from a room dull and black,  
a painful piercing in the ear of the hearer.

Time has destroyed a heart, wounded a dying soul,  
time wasted by want, taken by pride, killed by a  
lack of  
Love.

The heart rushes to the window and listens once  
again,

but hearing nothing, it slams it shut,  
disallowing any freedom.

Silence, a pointed silence, breath the only sound,  
a tangled mind in anger sits down and starts to  
cry.

Time passes once again, seemingly slower than  
before,  
and the dying soul yells out once more for air.

A rush of blood runs through the veins, hot and  
searing the flesh,  
the heart pulls open the window and screams as  
never before.

A song is heard in the distance,  
the heart leaps and jumps for joy,  
the soul pushes out through the body,  
and breathes in the clean rushing air.

The sound draws closer, a bird appears  
and rests on a branch nearby.  
Its wing is bent and in pain does it cry,  
and flies in sputters,  
its piercing bone burning the flesh.

The heart reaches out to the hurting soul,  
and the bird flies through the soul's window.

Now with fingers steady and still,  
the heart heals a broken wing.

Now with song so sweet and clear,  
the bird heals a broken heart.

Grow Love, Grow.

Paul L. Capps

### God and me

The rainfall pattern shows a piece  
Of God's unbounding gracious peace.  
I wonder as I walk along,  
If this is Love, or if it's wrong.

If I consider you and me,  
The Three of You, the one of me,  
I cannot help but stop and cry,  
Fall on my knees and start to see.

It all so easily appears,  
That what I have is something more.  
My face and hands now hot with tears,  
My clothes and back wet to the core.

If this is Love, I thank thee God,  
Now bring me to you, in one accord.

Paul L. Capps

### The Nature of the Skies

A dim shy orb peeks and as suddenly as it might  
gain such  
confidence as to rise above the earth,  
It is shrouded by the one which selfishly takes  
control.  
The form—unmeasurable—like a free form does it  
take shape.  
And just as it pleases does it bring life and take it  
away.  
A great mass yet of little weight,  
More vast than the seas—and no less powerful.  
Such an innocence does it seem,

White, immaculate—  
Floating softly overhead.  
Yet when anger it feels, so does it vent such  
madness on the  
Land Below.  
A pigment of gray appears—grows, grows—as gray  
as the dust,  
And with equal ease it flies and settles.  
Then screams are heard from the monster,  
A spoiled young child—building itself into a  
tantrum.  
A cry to split the sky and slam it back again.  
"Oh please, I don't want to die!"  
But listen it does not,  
Drunk in its fury it stirs the air,  
Stirs until the earth can hold no longer—  
Giving loose of its bind on the soil,  
The land users, the living, the dead:  
All succumb to the talons that rip, kill and maim;  
Can't something make it stop?

—Peace—

As a brand new day settles.  
The thing has gone, has burned itself out,  
Only to return again.  
The damage was done, the lives left must try and  
rebuild—  
Only to feel destruction once more before death. The  
fluffy  
white weightless thing entertains a small child,  
Deceiver of  
the skies. "Oh, look," he did say, "It looks like an  
elephant!" And a herd of them rolled him away.

Paul L. Capps

## Reverie

Reverie arms  
My mind with a shovel  
To dig in the grave  
Of contempt and of pride,  
Of hatred and guilt,  
Revenge and regrets.  
Uncovered and bared,  
They cry to me loud.  
Deal with me now.  
Uproot and usurp me.  
Toss out the sin  
You've unearthed in this grave.  
For surely, surely as evening approaches  
You'll occupy this ground one day.  
Then God will have reasoned  
And dealt with us all.

Vicki Carder



Michael Crook

### The Passing of Time

Sitting alone as the sun sinks below the horizon  
Thinking, wishing, hoping that life will continue.  
Yet sadness blows by as the wind whispers  
I know it will come, when?

I stop to wonder what happens next  
When will time halt or die  
And then I know it won't be soon  
Yet it won't be long.  
What will be...where will I go  
Will I live to see my death?

It all seems so strange...so odd and yet so real.  
The questions come and they go unanswered  
There is nothing new only the old recycled.  
What is to come...only the passing of time can tell.

Ruth Farris

**Novus Ordo Seclorum:  
A Didactic**

The New World Order bidden to arise  
From bombed-out buildings and from smoke-filled skies  
Will be no order worthy of our praise  
But signifies the denouement of days.  
All days, all nights, all that we know as time  
Will soon give way to the foretold sublime  
Eternal kingdom of the unique King  
Of Kings, to whom all rightful praises ring.  
Though all the nations' leaders should agree  
And all united form one policy  
They work in vain to build a house-on-sand  
Which falls flat in the rain. By His command,  
All builders who reject the Cornerstone  
Will be excluded from before His throne.

Kerry Gould  
January 16, 1991

In response to the call of George Bush for a "new world order."

Reflections On the Study  
Of English (No. 1)

Analysis, re-analysis,  
urinalysis -  
Plot, subplot, character, foil -  
Who is a foil to whom? and who  
cares?  
Shakespeare should have been required  
to analyze his own works and  
to record his own observations  
for a grateful posterity  
of English majors.

Kerry Gould  
(Exam week, December 1990)

To A Misguided Luna Moth

Strolling down the walkway to my car  
I saw you -  
trapped -  
large pale-green seeker of the moonlight -  
fluttering, held  
helpless  
caught in a spider's web  
beneath the lamp that lit my home-bound  
path.  
Having compassion on your plight,  
I freed you.  
In payment of my mercy, you remained  
trapped,  
enchanted still by that  
false light.

Kerry Gould

## Summer

You are the summer  
and I am the  
winter,  
yet you should not fear me,  
for though all seems  
cold and  
bare and life -  
less,  
it is not so.  
Touch me with your warmth,  
and let the sweet rain  
fall -  
for I can only stand and wait  
for you, my  
summer.

Kerry Gould



Andy Morton

## Rhythms That Rock The Earth

A warm, sunny evening arrived and the forest stood silent. The forest stretched itself far against the Great Smokey Mountains; it surrounded a small, blue house. From the house, hammer blows echoed. The strong, steady rhythm of the hammer blows traveled through a wide, crimson sky.

Walt Potter toiled in his workroom. The tall, lank man hammered wooden pegs into an oak plank. Sawdust covered his pale yellowish hair and pink face. Walt Potter ceased his hammering and placed his mallet on a tool-covered bench.

"Almost finished," he said. "How does it look so far?"

Walt sat on a wooden stool and faced his young son, "Day-dreaming again, eh, Weston?"

The small boy snapped to attention, "What?" Weston sat, with his legs dangling, on a wide, hardwood tool shelf. Sawdust covered his reddish brown hair and orange T-shirt. "Oh, it's great looking. Now can we go into the woods and play?"

"No son," Walt replied, "I'm afraid I'm too busy tonight."

Weston kicked his tennis shoes together and leaned his back against a large, metal toolbox. He sighed, blowing the hair at his forehead. "Well, can...can I go outside then, by myself for a while? I'm bored, dad."

Scratching his grayish yellow beard, Walt looked at his fidgety son. He watched Weston grab a piece of scrap wood; the boy rubbed it with his fingers. Walt examined his son's right arm — its atrophic condition. Deep inside, Walt grieved for his son. "Why did polio have to get him?" he thought. "How can a boy fight an invisible enemy?"

"Weston," Walt responded, "not tonight. And let me tell you why. The forest is really harsh and dangerous. The forest isn't a place. It's a thing. A person never plays in it. He goes to it for something — to gain something. But the forest only takes, never gives." Walt paused. Weston's face expressed confusion.

Walt tried a more simplified explanation, "Weston, the forest is a monster—a terrible, terrible monster. At day it disguises itself as a beautiful, wonderful place. But at night it reveals its true identity—a monster that devours." Weston cringed; his heart pounded.

"This is why you're only allowed to go when I'm with you," Walt said. "Never go into the woods by yourself. And never, ever go into the woods at night. The monster will try to kill and eat you." Weston peered out the workroom's dusty window and

probed the forest.

Walt lifted several toolboxes and placed them on his work counter. He opened them; he searched for some drill bits. Weston hopped from the tool shelf and left the workroom.

Thoughts of a dangerous forest concerned him. He tossed his father's warning in his head as a bright toy ball. He bounded through the small house—through the kitchen, and out the back-door. He sat himself at the house's back porch—and gazed into the absymal forest. It glowed under the evening sun. Warm breezes swayed the trees, making sighing sounds.

The forest stretched out and around the small boy; it extended far and draped nearby timeworn mountain peaks. Breezes sailed, soothed. A chorus of red-gold leaves cheered as the breezes moved them. Golden lights sparkled in the forest; they lit and moved among the many trees. Peering into the deep, Weston watched the lights.



"Persistence of Pipe Dream"  
Brett Hartman

A still, gentle whisper called from the forest, "Come here, Weston." The trees said, "Come and climb us." The rolling, plant-covered hills called to Weston, "Come and play." The forest appeared majestic and desirable. Breezes moved through grassy thickets; they swayed vine-shrouded limbs. The warm breezes caressed Weston's face. He smelled a crisp, earthen aroma.

Weston's heart leaped.

He watched the forest's wildlife. Bright, lime-green butterflies fluttered. A group of brilliant scarlet tanagers with black wings careened among the timbers, animating the forest. Bird songs drifted from the woodland; they created a melodious tune. Wildflowers filled the breezes with clean perfumes. The early fall forest displayed its rugged beauty—a collage of colors: brilliant yellows, brownish oranges, bright reds, and yellowish greens. Weston examined them.

Weston leaped from the porch and ran into the woodland.

The small boy played—free from any cares. Scaling its long, straight trunk, Weston climbed in a massive hardwood tree. He looped through its narrow crown of branches. He lost himself in its thick plume of brilliant yellow leaves. He giggled and laughed.

Weston returned to the forest floor. He crawled into a wild thicket of shrubs and small trees. Their hairy twigs and small, greenish leaflets tickled his face.

Weston slid down hillsides covered with umbrellalike leaf clusters. His mirthful play swayed small, greenish white flowers. Weston scurried into a gorge filled with erect, shrubby, thornless plants with wide, large, maple-like leaves. He hid under them—in the cool shade.

Weston climbed out of the gorge and found a weedy hollow. Tired from playing, he slumped inside of it. He relaxed in its soft cluster of tubular thistles.

His eyelids felt heavy, cumbersome. He fell asleep.

A nervous sensation—a tingling of the spine—shook him awake. As he roused, Weston looked around. He examined the forest canopy. Large trees with rounded crowns of many long, spreading and horizontal branches loomed. They outlined a dimming sky.

Weston slowly shook his head in confusion. The forest

appeared different, changed. It presented itself as strange and alien. Spurred with fright, Weston popped to his feet and searched for a familiar tree or hill.

He walked around, peering and searching. He felt an ill sensation twist within his stomach.

As he looked around, he found the trees new, vague. Strangely shaped shrubs and grotesquely formed tree trunks encircled him. He saw odd vines, in great numbers, lying about. Weston smelled oozing pinesap: it dominated the air. He heard the birds sing an absurd song. Their off-key notes and irregular rhythms filled the forest.

A repeated hammer blow shook Weston's thoughts: lost, lost, lost! He tried to think of a way out—a way home. He pondered, fretted. Desperate with fear, Weston shouted into the expanse, "Dad! Dad, help me!" Silence answered him with a deep, penetrating stillness. Weston collapsed and hugged his knees.

Night fell. Shadows grew and blackened around Weston's prostrate form. They expanded through the forest as a tenacious cancer in a healthy limb. Through the shadows, a chill west wind whispered across the forest floor, causing dead leaves to dance.

Lying flat on the ground, Weston listened to a nearby, unseen bird. It asked Weston a question, "*ti-ti-ti?*" Its voice sounded thin and wiry. The unseen bird followed its question with a tumbling chatter.

The bird's chattering reminded Weston of his father. He thought of how he and his father lived alone. They moved near Bryson City a few months earlier so that his father could find work in lumbering. His father rented a modest house deep in the forest for them to live in.

Weston remembered hiking and fishing with his father in the forest. He remembered camping in the chill nights—how he felt scared. But the warmth and strength of his father cheered him, then he could sleep.

Weston remembered his father's warning: he was to never play in the forest alone—especially after evening. His father said the forest changed then—became dangerous, monstrous.

"*Ti-ti-ti?*" the bird asked again. Making impatient fluttering sounds, the bird flew away.

The night darkened the forest. It cast heavy shadows over Weston. He felt trapped, ensnared. He thought he heard the night make slavering sounds. The night changed the forest.

Weston saw gray and black shapes creep and cover the trees. Racing through the forest, icy wind blasted Weston. Shivering, he examined the sky: thick, murky clouds filled it. The clouds stirred and moved with turbulence. They threw dim, wine-purple lights against the forest; Weston watched the wine-purple lights. They shimmered. They outlined the trees, making them black. The lights twisted great tree limbs, making them brutish and tyrannical. Weston caught sight of moving shadows: they oozed over shrubs and bushes, over rocks and ferns. As he lay still on the ground, Weston felt the landscape move and heave. He felt thumps and thuds; he detected an odd rhythm — a malignant beat.

Weston rose to his feet. He felt alone — alone in a crowded place.

The boy saw the forest quicken, animate itself; it threw off its ornate mask of the day and revealed a dark, devilish face. He saw the shadows twist and contort themselves around him. He saw towering timbers rise, darken; they poised as to devour him. He heard the forest breathe in a hushed, flesh-starved manner. He heard the hills murmur.

Weston circled his steps and examined the changing forest. He felt surrounded. Trees and rolling hills stretched in every direction. They stood about the boy as the fierce siege machines of a vast army.

Now the shadows danced an exquisite waltz. Weston heard the shadows crackle leaves and crunch twigs. He listened to them whisper fiendishly.

Agitated gales churned the waters of nearby Fontana Lake; they lifted a ghostly sigh into the forest. Weston heard the sigh, and it filled him with dread.

Weston saw the shadowy shapes of small, shrubby trees swell. He watched hard, rigid forms thrust skyward. He heard the night strip away the forest foliage, exposing strange tentacles and monstrous, insect like arms. Again, he felt the ground grumble and thump. He listened to clicks and slithering sounds. He heard leaves crunch and trees groan. He watched in horror as bushes shook and rattled, as vines slid across the ground, and as tree limbs moved and flexed.

The forest spoke; a deep, thunderous voice echoed through the dark, "Ah, what have we here." A breeze carried a strong-smelling, feculent odor. "A small boy who lost his way."

Spinning around, Weston searched for the voice's origin. He breathed fast and heavy; his arms and hands trembled.

"I know you, boy," the voice said. "Your name is Weston — Weston Potter. You've been here before with your father. I hate your father."

"Who...who are you?" Weston asked.

"I'm the monster your father correctly described — the one he admonished you to avoid," the voice answered. "I'm Strangle Wood."

"How come I...I can't see you?" Weston returned. "Where are you?"

"Oh, foolish boy, do you not remember what your father told you?" Strangle Wood said. "I'm the trees, the bushes, the flowers, the vines. I'm the stones and the hills. I'm the forest. And, Weston, I'm all around you!"

Strangle Wood roared his final remark. Weston covered his ears and fell to his knees.

"Stop your cowering," Strangle Wood said scathingly. "You're an ugly thing, aren't you? I see your arm. It's withered. It's dying. You're dying, and for good reason."

Standing to his feet, Weston grabbed his right arm with his left hand.

"You've earned your punishment," Strangle Wood said ran-  
corously. "You deserve polio. You've been nothing but a problem to your father. You've continued to disobey him, spite him, shame him. You deserve a disease that paralyzes and deforms."

"Stop!" Weston yelled. "Don't say that. It's not true."

"Pah! Take a better look at yourself. You're a monster. In time polio will twist your other arm—and legs. You'll revolt everyone who sees you. They'll call you a monster because you are one."

Weston held his right arm tightly. Walking backwards, he shook his head in disagreement.

"There's no use to struggle," Strangle Wood said. "Allow polio to thrive. Give in to its power."

"No, I'll never do that," Weston said under his breath. "Never!"

"If you won't let polio destroy you, then I'll do it myself," Strangle Wood said. Loud booms shook the ground.

Hundreds of long, prickly arms moved through the dark and reached for Weston. They wrapped themselves around his legs. The prickly arms wrenched and pulled, scraping the boy's skin. He screamed as the prickly needles stabbed his legs. Falling to

the ground, Weston kicked his legs wildly and ripped several of the prickly arms apart—enough to free himself. He struggled to his feet and groped through the dark.

As he stumbled forward, great spidery limbs grabbed his arms—then his legs. Sharp spurs covered the limbs; they snagged Weston's T-shirt and denims, ripping them. The spurs cut the boy's arms and legs. Other limbs flogged his back.

Weston pulled his arms and legs. He squirmed free of the spurs; they left gaping holes in his T-shirt, rips in his denims.

The ground shook. Earth tremors knocked Weston from his feet. Through the dim light, Weston saw the ground split and gape. Bizarre, razor-like, green teeth became visible in the openings. All around him, huge mouths formed in the ground. Thousands of teeth filled each mouth; Weston saw them glisten with venom. Their jaws moved and chopped, grunting and barking.

As he crawled among the snapping mouths, Weston's heart beat with a churning force. The mouths dripped and spewed venom; they splashed Weston with a slimy grime. He felt the grime blister his skin with painful burns. Weston stood to his feet and jumped past the last mouths. As he leaped, the mouths snapped the air with their teeth; they craved his body parts.

The terrified boy ran past a bushy hedge and between some looming trees. In the treetops, Weston heard rustling leaves. He slowly looked up as hundreds of twisted, thorned tentacles fell from the forest canopy. They roped themselves around Weston, lifting him high in the air. The tentacles made a tense sound like tightening ropes; they squeezed Weston's wrists and neck. Weston grunted, wrestled.

The thorned tentacles dashed Weston's body into the gloomy forest floor. They slung him in the face of tree trunks and slammed him against stony ground. The tentacles swung the boy with a repeated motion; the impacts stunned him with inflamed agony.

With his left hand, Weston grabbed and wrenched the tentacles. He tore several apart and wiggled free of the rest. The tentacles retreated to the forest ceiling. Their attack bruised Weston; he felt pounding aches, saw white lines in front of his eyes.

Coughing for air, he struggled to stand. He felt the sting of rope burns on his neck and arms. Cold, damp sweat drenched his T-shirt and hair.

Weston stood and peered through the dark. Trembling, he

saw strange, abstract forms dash through the woodland. He heard Strangle Wood grin: a rancid odor filled the air. The odor sickened Weston. He gagged. The unclean smell twisted his stomach with nausea.

Squinting his eyes, Weston stood very still and peeked into the gloom. He saw a great number of malformed, humanoid shapes dancing between the trees and vines. Each shape appeared hairy, prickly, covered with spikelike horns. The shapes danced wildly, leaping and sprinting. Weston heard them growl and snarl as angry dogs.

The malformed beasts pounced Weston. The boy jumped backwards, stumbled, and bolted through a black cluster of trees. His heart pounded, burned. His eyes teared. As he ran, his cuts and sores lashed him with throbbing torment. Panicked thoughts filled his mind; all he wanted was to escape.

Behind him, Weston heard the pursuing beasts; their doglike barks and howls sounded wicked, ghoulish. Tears blurring his sight, he tried hard to see where he ran. The dark woodland spun as a kaleidoscope of dim lights and pitch-black shades.

One beast reached the horrified boy; it slashed and clubbed Weston. Another beast arrived; it scratched and clawed him. Another beast shoved the struggling boy, causing him to fall with a rolling tumble. Weston slid across a patch of rocky, scree-covered ground. Dust and dirt smeared his face and clothes.

Weston climbed to his feet and ran. The shadowy beasts grabbed his legs, hindering his balance; Weston fell to his chest. His hands suffered raw abrasions. As they advanced, Weston heard the beasts slaver and gnash their teeth. He stumbled upright and hastened off.

Weston bolted for a thick stretch of forest. The dark blinded him; blackness surrounded him. Sweat matted his hair. Weston's heart raced. His chest heaving, he labored to breathe. The chill air froze his lungs.

The boy ran across thick, weed-covered terrain; he leaped over fallen trees. Without warning, the beasts grabbed Weston. Their many hands jostled the boy; they dug their dagger-like nails in his soft flesh. Weston screamed. The beasts howled with lustful glee. They tugged and pulled him—jerked him with murderous savagery. Together, the beasts threw Weston to the ground.

Weston plunged into a muddy bog, knocking the wind out of him. Wet leaves and muck chocked his face. Muddy grime

covered his body, weighing him down. Weston heard the beasts leap to the looming canopy; they vanished.

Weston coughed for air. Exhaustion sapped his strength; he felt very tired. He pulled himself out of the bog and collapsed on a weedy bank. Rolling to his back, he heard Strangle Wood chortle. Its cacophonous rhythm hurt his ears and rocked the forest floor.

Weston groaned.

Giant, insect-like, barbed arms hovered over Weston's beaten form. At each end of the arms protruded huge crab-like pincers that snapped and sliced the air. The insect-like arms hung from the forest canopy and drifted to the exhausted boy. "Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha," Strangle Wood grinned triumphantly. "You're crushed. Defeated! Now, you wretched garbage heap, I'll snuff your life out!"

With his left hand, Weston groped through the weeds and thistles. He found a firm, long branch; its skin felt fissured with narrow, scaly ridges. He grabbed it. His wounds bit into him as he struggled to stand. He saw the approaching arms and tensed every part of his body. With his left hand, Weston tightly gripped the branch. The arms surrounded him; the pincers snapped and clasped, making sharp, clicking sounds.

Weston's right arm tingled. He glanced at his atrophic arm—its withered muscles, its discolored skin. Weston balanced his good arm—his left arm—with his wasted arm. He regretted that he was unable to fight with both. He stifled his grief, replacing it with a yearning to gouge Strangle Wood's eyes—if it had any.

A strong gale blew deep within young Weston—a will to survive. Handling it as a sword, Weston raised the branch.

The insect-like arms charged him. Weston screamed and savagely swung the heavy branch. He clubbed and beat their barbed hides; his swipes snapped and shattered them. Scales and crustaceous shells fell and flipped in all directions.

The insect-like arms retracted skyward. Running inside the darkness, Weston pressed forward. He saw needle-covered tentacles burst from the forest floor; he thought they looked like the arms of a giant octopus. They struck and whacked his head. Their repeated blows stunned Weston, beating him to the ground. Blood flowed from his forehead and nose; he went half out of his mind with pain.

Weston staggered to his feet and swung the branch with all his strength. He flailed the needle-covered tentacles. He shouted

with each swing. His blows sent the tentacles flopping to the ground and spinning into trees. Other tentacles lashed and pounded Weston. The boy hacked and chopped in response; tears of anger streamed. He yelled till his throat hurt and screamed with each tightfisted swat of the branch.

With each strike he made, Weston advanced a couple of steps. The tentacles wiggled and whipped. Their prickly hides scratched and slashed Weston's face and arms; he tasted his own blood. The boy chopped with a savage, repeated motion. He noticed that he made his way through a very dense range of trees.

More and more tentacles attacked. Their thick, squirming surge appeared terrible, evil. Their jagged needles covered Weston with painful scrapes. Weston swept the branch up and down, from side to side. He slammed and pounded his way through the forest. Sweat and tears burned his eyes — made them swollen, red.

Suddenly, the tentacles retreated in the direction of the shadowy ground. His chest heaving for air, Weston stood alone. His shoulders and head moved with the rhythm of his breathing. Spasms of cramping soreness throbbed his fighting arm. His hands felt sticky with dried blood and sweat. He examined the branch: nicks and gashes covered it.

"Face me," Strangle Wood said. "Face me, Weston." Its voice sounded menacing, godless.

In the near distance, surrounded by towering trees and brush, Weston beheld Strangle Wood's face; it belittled him.

Shuddering, Weston turned to confront it. He studied the face. Great gnarled timbers and thousands of twisted vines shaped its features. Two cavernous spaces served as its eyes. Within each space, a furnace burned; humming with extreme violence, Strangle Wood's eyes glowed as two white-hot fires. A swath of thick, green leaves outlined its wide forehead. The sight of its mouth shocked Weston; its mammoth, beastly, dagger-filled mouth opened and closed slowly. An eerie, emerald light shined from it. Its dagger-like teeth dripped acid.

Strangle Wood's face struck Weston with fright, awe. To him it held a bony, skeletal aspect, echoing death's personification.

The boy glanced around; he heard the hills pant. He returned his gaze to the face. Strangle Wood bellowed. A hot, dry wind blasted Weston; a rank, offensive odor smothered the

air. Weston discovered that Strangle Wood's breath reeked with the foul smell of dog excrement. The odor revolted him; he choked and retched.

He fought down his sickness — fought down his fear. With a dry, exhausted scream, Weston charged Strangle Wood's giant face. He raised the branch over his head; with all his strength, Weston struck Strangle Wood between the eyes.

The mountainside jolted.

An explosion ripped the face apart with terrific force. Sparks showered; a single, distressingly loud thunderclap resounded across the mountains. From the explosion, white light shined as potently as the sun; its searing heat smote the tip of Weston's branch with fire. With concussive power, the explosion swept the little boy from his feet; it flung him into the air. Weston swooped backwards and spun wildly. He landed in a tangled mesh of vines.

Abruptly, other explosions announced themselves: they lit the forest with flashing lights. Great, billowy, blood-red smoke



"After Eventide, My Sweet"  
Brett Hartman

gushed from the explosions. From the sky, powerful gales blew: they swayed whole trees. The gales pushed the blood-red smoke, causing it to rage through the forest.

High above the forest skyline, wine-purple storm clouds swirled and grumbled. Weston, shaking his head and blinking his eyes, watched the wine-purple nimbus. He heard the jarring explosions. He recovered from the blast and freed himself of the tangled vines. Covered with grimy dirt and dried blood, Weston ran through the destruction. He carried the branch with an excited grip; a desire to live burned in his chest.

The landscape quaked and trembled. It made the droning rumble of an avalanche – a collapsing mountain. With the aid of the flashing explosions, Weston saw massive boulders split the ground and jut skyward. Ragged hunks of stone and debris lobbed through the air. Seismic jolts rocked the forest floor. The ground dropped repeatedly from under Weston's feet; he fell many times.

Through the intermittent peal of explosions, Weston heard the gales scream. He saw them uproot entire trees as if it were child's play. The trees fell with booming crashes raising dust clouds and sending large branches spinning through the air.

A massive tree with a straight trunk and a dense, rounded crown of foliage toppled on Weston; as it fell, it made a terrible, whining swish. Weston leaped past its hulking trunk. The tree crashed with a dulled kerboom; its rigid branches whipped his back. Weston gritted his teeth.

Shaken with fear and injury, Weston ran on. He saw explosions all around him; dazzling yellow lights flared. The explosions rained fiery darts. Weston covered his head with his arms. The darts hissed through the sky.

Weston heard Strangle Wood shriek with earth-rending force. Its terrifying noise hurt his ears. He ran on.

A billow of blood-red smoke devoured Weston's small form. The smoke carried thick dust. Weston coughed; his eyes teared. The blood-red smoke shrouded everything as a soupy fog. Gales churned the smoke, swirling and thinning it out.

Threatening his life, the apocalyptic devastation dazed Weston. The explosions thundered with greater uproar as he ran, Weston sealed his hands over his ears. The explosions flashed with blinding radiance. Weston winced.

The heat of the explosions created a forest fire – a land-wasting holocaust. Weston caught sight of great fiery surges:

they stormed through the forest. The flames marched through the trees as a great juggernaut, destroying and consuming everything in their path. The forest fire's flames glowed with a yellowish gold energy—illuminating the dim sky with blazing orange lights and making the nimbuses brick-red.

The forest fire roared. Weston recognized the sound it made; it resembled the din of crashing rapids and the earsplitting clamor of a waterfall. Its savage roar reminded Weston of a past visit to Niagara Falls.

A fiery surge rushed in Weston's direction. He felt its scalding heat. He watched the flames char entire trees, incinerate grassy fields, and reduce boulders to slag. The flames scorched the soil, turning it to sand. Weston watched the fiery surge leave great swaths of ash-covered land in its wake. Weston stopped running and gaped. The forest fire's godlike fury shocked him.

Weston dove headfirst into a weedy hollow. His head struck an unseen rock, throbbing his skull with aches. Weston lost consciousness.

The fiery surge swept over the hollow. Swirling from the sky, powerful gales pushed it across the mountainside, rejoining it with the forest fire's main thrust. The forest fire crossed over the mountains with a colossal, flowing movement. Its course circled, accelerated. Its flames blazed higher; they hummed and thundered with violent force.

The gales carried the holocaust over miles and miles of land. They spiraled the fires upward with a powerful, sweeping motion. Whole treetops convulsed into flames. Leaving a scorched, lunar surface, the gales lifted the flames from the mountains.

The gyrating fire and smoke hurricanized upward; the fire stretched to the brick-red nimbuses, threatening to pierce the heavens. The stormy gales screamed insanely; their motion coiled the circling flames, making them funnel-shaped and tornado-like: a fire-pillar. The fire-pillar's arching flames towered over the mountains with its glaring light and spinning smoke. Its overpowering clamor was comparable to that made by racing locomotives.

The towering fire-pillar spouted and surged into the brick-red nimbuses. The nimbuses consumed the whirling gale of fire. As they swallowed the flames, the storm clouds flashed and bellowed. The fire-pillar vanished in the clouds. The nimbuses lost the brick-red color and regained their wine-purple

hue. The clamoring ceased.

The wine-purple nimbus sailed east; their floating movement revealed a deep, black, star-filled sky. Luminous streamers of rust-colored light sparkled in the sky's upper atmosphere, then vanished. A deafening rumble rolled across the countryside. The mountains trembled, then silenced.

Strangle Wood died.

Calm blanketed the mountainside. A single, bobbing light shined in the forest. The light radiated a warm, golden energy. A thin, blond-bearded man carried the light. The man lifted the lantern high; it illuminated the still, dark forest. Walking through the thick foliage, he shouted into the dark; the shouts broke the silence.

The lantern shined warmly, revealing the sleeping child lying in a deep, weedy hollow. Kneeling, Walt carefully removed Weston from the hollow. He held the boy close to himself.

Walt noticed that his son held a branch tightly. This oddity spoke to him — revealed a world-changing truth to the marrow



"To Brood the Witching Hour"  
Brett Hartman

of his bones. Walt lifted his gaze to the black sky. He knew that his son challenged the invisible enemy; deep within himself — in his own way — Weston struggled against polio. "I should've known," Walt thought. "That's where the invisible enemy can be found, for there it wears a solid shape — a touchable form." Walt studied the stars — the wide constellations. "Blast it! I wish polio was the only problem. Sadly, it's just one of many rhythms that rock the earth." Walt viewed the cold depths of space and felt a cutting breeze. "We all must face them, and fight them with courage. Even if we lose, we've got to try." The raw autumn breeze nipped his face and gnawed his beard. He heard Weston whimper. Walt looked at him. He wrapped the boy under his coarse wool duffle coat. "I'll stand beside you, son," Walt whispered. "I'll fight them with you. It's all I can do."

Carrying the exhausted boy with his right arm, Walt Potter stood to his feet. He hoisted the lantern with his left and walked through the still forest — headed home. His lantern bobbed, shining steadily. Its golden energy welcomed the dawn's daylight.

Brett Hartman



Andy Morton

### Prison of Pain

At first, there is pain.  
SHARP AND INTENSE.  
Then, the flare slowly dulls  
Until it is an aching.  
Soon, the aching stops,  
And there is nothing.  
Nothing but the pressure and the memory of the  
pain.  
This is the hell that you've put me through.  
If I had any tears left,  
I would be drowning now.  
If I could find another,  
I would be gone.  
I can't believe I actually chose  
To stand against your wrath.  
There really is no need for me to  
Still beat my head against the wall,  
When you could care less about me.  
You don't see the blood.  
No more sacrifices...  
There's nothing left to give.  
There's nothing that you want...  
Except my tears,  
And they are all gone...  
Gone with the blood and the pain.

Angela M. Hurst

### Prayer of Confusion

Dear God,  
What do you do when someone you love  
Tries to kill themselves and others?  
...Knowing that the problem is a low self-image  
Which is usually a symptom of schizophrenia.  
She's in a mental institution now.  
But she's been in there before.  
How can I help her when I feel like my life is  
falling apart, too?  
Maybe if I would have been there,  
I could have helped her,  
But maybe not.  
God, you said that you would be with me  
ALWAYS.  
It's "always" now.  
And, God,  
Thank-you for my friends, few though they are,  
They are true.

Angela M. Hurst



Andy Morton

"In Memory of T.B.F."

Day after day I hear people  
Saying "I love you," like it's  
A chore; like it's some bloody chore!  
They say "love" like it's a promise  
Of a future together.

But that's not Love; Love was never that.  
Never a promise of the future.

Love has always been a  
Remembrance of the past.

A comparison:  
of past with present,  
Of what was with what is;  
Not of what might be.

Only when you give part of  
Yourself to someone,  
A piece of your soul,  
And that person is taken away,  
Do you realize Love.  
True Love is not in the giving,  
But in the taking away.  
With part of your soul elsewhere,  
You can only Love the person  
To whom you gave it.

You never had a chance to take it back.  
They stole away with your soul immediately  
And left you wondering why.  
But questions never provide answers.

So it has come to pass  
That Love is not  
The giving of yourself,  
That is trust and hope.

Love is  
When your trust is betrayed,  
Your hope shattered,  
And all you can do  
Is reach into the emptiness of your soul ...  
And relish the pain.

Greg E. Mackey

### "An Autobiography"

I started on a journey, several years ago.  
My final destination, was all I had to know.

I know not where I am, nor where I go from here.

My past is not my own, and I don't even care.

Red death is my reward for crying tears of blood,  
And everybody else is lost beneath the flood.

The other saddened souls were condemned from the start.

Like puppets on a string, we all played sim'lar parts.

My time is drawing near, that's all my heart can say.

Like dust upon the wind, my friends are blown away.

But when I've reached my journey's end,  
And Death proclaims me done,  
My soul will overwhelm him,  
And he'll say I have won.

Greg E. Mackey

## When You Cried

When you cried,  
It did something to me.  
There was this overwhelming,  
Undescribable feeling that came over me.

This feeling said, "it's o.k. to cry."  
You had told me that time and time before,  
But it was hard for me to allow that  
Emotion to come out.

When you cried,  
It was as you were saying "see me, I'm crying,  
It's really o.k."  
You were the first man I had ever seen cry.

When I was younger, I asked,  
"Why does daddy never cry?"  
My mother told me that men  
Cry inside. That I always believed.

So, maybe after all these years  
I was just trying to be like my daddy.  
After all, if daddy didn't cry,  
Then why should daddy's little girl.

Thank you for letting me  
Know that it's not just  
Something that little girls do.  
Thank you for letting me  
See you cry.

Robin R. McAlon

## Thank You

Thank you for always being there for me.  
You always know the right words to say.  
You know how to make me feel so very special  
each and every day.  
Thank you for always being there for me.

When I am down, you know how to bring me up.  
When I am sick, you know how to make me feel  
better.  
When I am sad, you know how to make me happy.  
Thank you for always being there for me.

Your loving thoughts and big dreams that you  
carry inside  
that heart of yours are all so wonderful.  
You are so very sincere about everything you do  
and say.  
The Lord is definitely with you.  
Thank you for always being there for me.

With you, I have learned to grow and learn and  
become so  
open with my feelings that have been locked up for  
so long.  
With you, I have found true happiness that I had  
been  
Searching for without even knowing it.  
Without you I am sure I could have done all of  
this –  
but I am glad that I got to do it with you.  
Thank you for always being there for me.

With all of this in mind all I have to say is we  
don't need  
to look back, we know where we have been. Lets  
just live for  
today and pray for tomorrow. May God Bless  
You.

Robin R. McAhon  
10-29-90

### Black Man

I am a man in this world,  
I am no different than any other man,  
But something keeps holding me back,  
I have so many dreams and aspirations,  
I have a mind, the heart, and the will,  
But something keeps holding me back,  
I am a good person,  
I also work very hard.  
But something keeps holding me back,  
They say I can be anything I want,  
I can go anywhere I please,  
And can do anything,  
But something keeps holding me back,  
I can try to reach the sky if no one stops me,  
I can be your best friend if you let me,  
I will even swallow my pride if given the opportunity,  
If you don't hold me back.

Richard Noble

### The Answer

I search here and there,  
Looking everywhere,  
Extremely scared,  
To only find the answer.

Richard Noble



Andy Morton

## To Save a Child's Life

Dear Lord,  
Here's a child with no real life,  
She just bears the pain to stay alive,  
Never knowing when not to cry,  
Never stopping from trying,  
It just seems like an endless fight.

Dear Lord,  
Here's a child that no one cares for,  
Needs love and someone to adore,  
She can't run from daddy anymore,  
She can't be behind closed doors,  
And just live to survive.

Dear Lord,  
Here's a child that needs a friend,  
Someone to watch over her until the end,  
Someone to stop her from remembering way back  
then,  
Not knowing when,  
She will have a normal life.

Dear Lord,  
Here's a child who begs to be free,  
Needs your love to see,  
Needs to just be,  
Or have something to believe,  
For things to be right.

Richard Noble  
6-22-89

### It's as Clear as Black and White

That morning the sky had arisen with an orange beam,  
And an Old Man stepped out on to His porch with His face full of gleam,  
He looked across the field and admired the perfection of His work the day before,  
He smiled briefly and began to work some more.  
The battered Man; tired, but full of joy, began planting seeds in the soil,  
And He worked His way from the farthest part, to the house where there were some tracks of oil,  
Then He went back to His porch to behold the site,  
As He exclaimed to Himself, "It's as clear as black and white."  
And the sun that had risen earlier that morning, was replaced by the moon which was slowly appearing,  
And while He slept the seeds began to grow,  
And later that night the winds began to blow.

The next morning when The Old Man stepped out on to His porch there was rain,  
And all the work from days before was no longer the same,  
The Old Man took off His hat and rubbed His forehead,  
Because everything He planted was now dead.  
Then The Man walked on to the field and began to work in the rain,  
He began to fix the plants that remained,  
But some of the plants in particular gave Him a great fight,  
As He reflected on what had happened just over night; from black to white,  
Just as it seemed the plants had no hope at all,  
The rain stopped to fall,  
And The Man looked up only to see a ray of light,  
Then the sky became as clear as black and white.

Richard Noble

Challenges of Intellect  
No. 1

From innermost depths  
Alarms  
Ring Out.  
Triggering responses.

Lively sounds  
Interrupt silence  
Kindling some  
Embarrassment.

Trumpeter of the movement!  
Herald of inner turmoil!  
Exhilarating calm quiet air.  
Robust villain!  
Excuse yourself.

Impulsive, irreverent inebriant.  
Swift, sometimes silent.

Nervous, nagging neurotoxin!  
Obscene objection!

Tarry for a moment,  
Open to our senses.  
Move us to agreement  
Over your blatant interjection,  
Races do not bind me!  
Resonantly, I live on!  
Oracle of inflammation  
Waking even the dullest sense.

Chip Reeves

Challenges of Intellect  
No. VII

Elegant to say the least.  
Always a grand experience.  
Talk about it all the time.  
In all kinds of company.  
Never a dull moment, you should  
Go at least once a week.

After midnight it's an interesting scene.  
Timeless characters, some frightening, some keen.

All brought together at this  
Late night "Mecca."  
Enjoying the cuisine that  
X-ceeds all others.  
Study while you're there.

Chip Reeves

### An Observation

Isn't it funny how language works.

Two different people can say the same words and mean something totally different.

For instance, if a lady with a dismal look on her face came to you, took a seat, hung her head down and said, "I'm a bad mother," You would probably feel sorry for her. You might try to comfort her and say, "I'm sure your children won't hold it against you."

How would you feel, however, if a tall, muscular, mean looking man came up to you, grabbed you by the collar and said the very same words? "I'm a bad mother" certainly no longer has anything to do with maternal abilities.

Interesting, isn't it?

Chip Reeves

### Mrs. Fletcher

Mrs. Fletcher's house is nice and neat,  
She works hard to keep it clean.  
But all her life she had to worry  
About troubles unforeseen.

Mrs. Fletcher's house is tidy and quaint.  
She lives there all alone.  
And in case she's feeling tired or faint,  
There's a strange device by the phone.

Mrs. Fletcher's bathroom is a sparkling place,  
The tile, it shines so blue.  
There's Mrs. Fletcher on her face.  
My goodness! What's wrong with you?

She did not go in there to hide,  
Just to get her plastic cup.  
But why, dear lady, are you on your side?  
"Because... I'VE FALLEN, AND I CAN'T GET UP!!!"

Chip Reeves



Zack Welch

## Change Yourself

There's so much pain in this world of ours,  
People fighting hour after hour.  
Everyone stands to have their say  
"Things have to be no or my way."

Why oh why are people like this?  
Don't they know it's everyone's wish:  
To live in a world that's perfect to them,  
Their way and your way - not done on a whim?

Will the people ever learn  
To change the world you take turns?  
And when you have this chance to change,  
Change yourself in different ways.

You can make the world a better place,  
but first please learn it's not a race,  
To see who's better and who can do more;  
Instead it should be team work - not a war.

Rachel Reynolds

Walk with me,  
Stand by my side,  
Show me you care,  
Always abide.

Walk with me  
Follow my lead;  
Show me you care,  
Always take heed.

Walk with me  
Take my hand  
Let me lead you  
To the promised land.

Come along  
Come and see  
Walk with me  
through eternity.

...walk with Jesus.

Rachel Reynolds

### The Girl of My Dreams

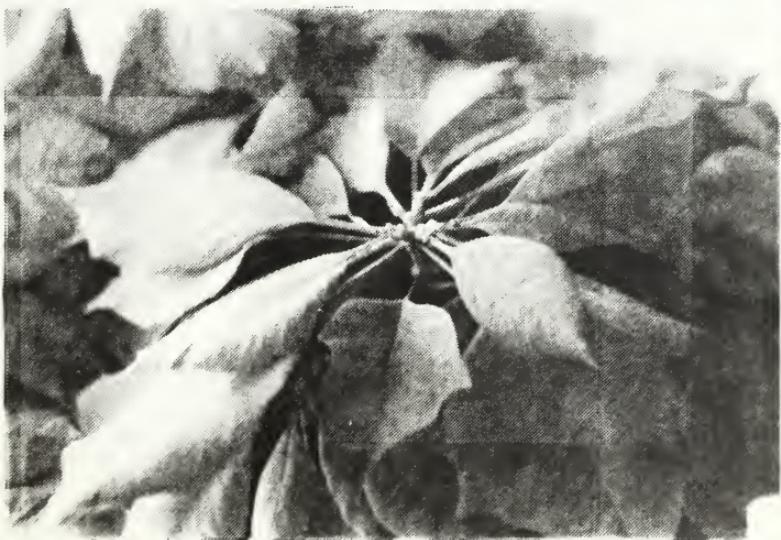
eyes that sparkle with impish light  
illuminate rooms once dark as night  
a smile that warms the coldest parts  
melting the ice and breaking hearts

a female form that can burn through stone  
flesh and muscle, blood and bone  
umber tresses with russet streaks  
cascading like streams from alpine peaks

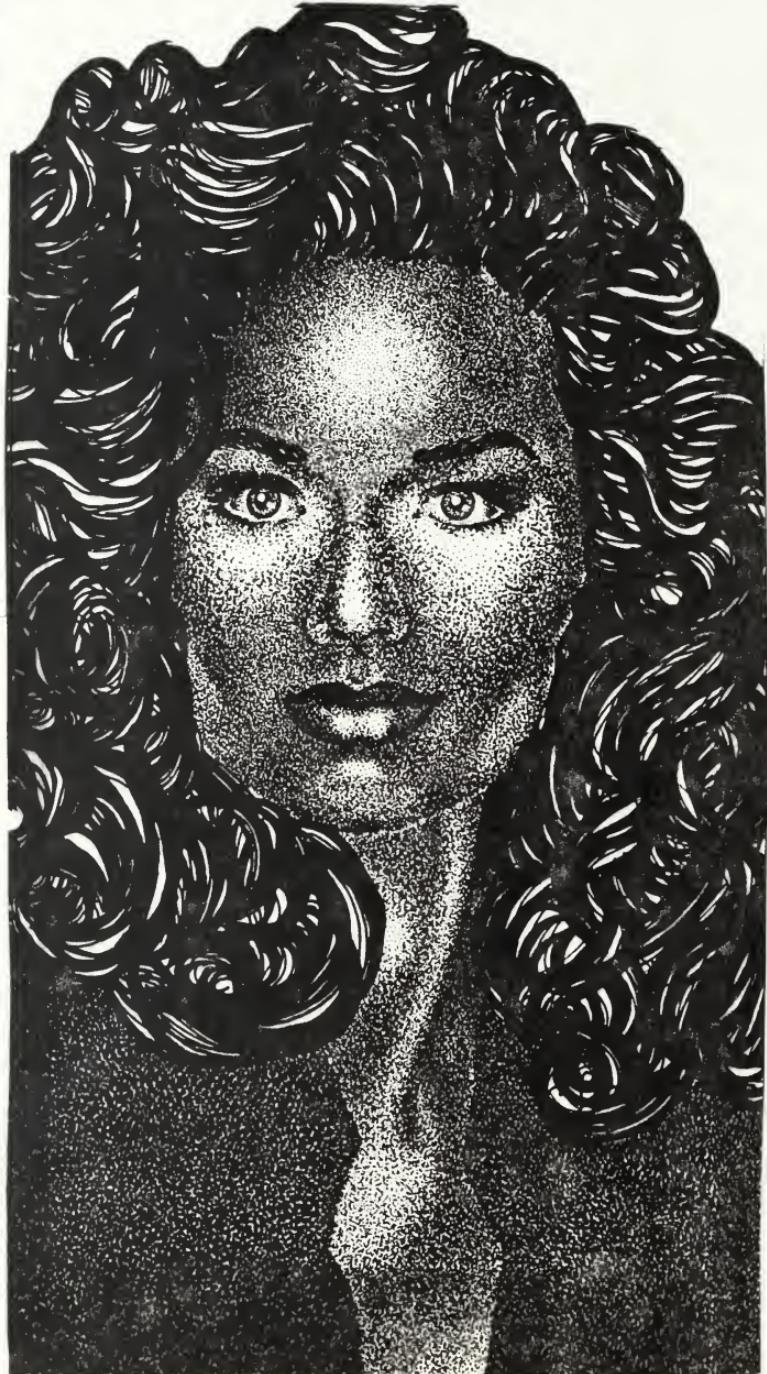
skin as soft as a kitten's purr  
long, tanned legs stand under her  
a wink, a grin, a little tease  
to my heart she holds the keys

all in all, she's a woman complete  
one for one, no other can compete  
truth and love on which you can depend  
her friendship is a line which doesn't break or bend...

Michael S. Riley



"Lucid Intervals"  
Brett Hartman



**"She Changed Me Into an Energetically Weary Flying Machine"**  
Brett Hartman

## For Us Students

Beside me are books  
Papers and pens, tools for work.  
We study for our life in the future  
We study 'cause we have goals  
How can we reach our goals?

We continue to struggle  
To satisfy ourselves  
By studying we do it ...  
With studies we get it  
Oh books, papers and pens!  
There is a never ending use  
Of these things to satisfy us.

Chari Tagulao



Zack Welch

## **Touching the Sky**

I had not really thought much about success or what it meant to me until this summer. I had worked at Camp Lavida and had met a wonderful young girl who would teach me the meaning of success. Diane was the most fun-loving, energetic, and talkative person I had ever met. She always smiled and not once did I see her look sad or homesick. She managed to get along with the other campers and had a great time in all the things that she did—no matter how boring it seemed.

I would walk with Diane to and from the lake every morning so she could go canoeing. She would tell me about her hopes, her dreams, and her goals. She wanted to go into the military and become a pilot. She would talk about how someday she would fly the fastest planes, make hair-raising turns, and touch the sky.

To Diane these goals were within reach but, to me, they seemed like a miracle. It was not because I thought that the odds were against her. Diane had cerebral palsy. She walked using crutches and had a speech impediment. Yet, even with these setbacks her will and determination were undaunted.

Her spirit was strong and unfaltering. She never complained about her crutches and she anxiously waited for the day she could put them away. She never apologized for her speech; she repeated her sentences cheerfully. She never accepted pity; she was determined to do it herself. Most of all she never gave up on her dreams; she continued to hope.

No matter how bad I thought Diane's situation was, she just looked at it as a few obstacles. She still held on to her dreams and goals and conquered each day with success. Diane showed me that success was not how many certificates you have in your scrapbook or how many plaques you have on your wall. It was and is how you face and overcome your daily trials while keeping your goals in mind. Success is not just one bright moment, but also the little moments that help you reach your goal and eventually touch the sky!

Bertha Wright



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Each year student editors solicit contributions from CSU students, faculty, staff and alumni for inclusion in the **Sefer**.

The volunteer staff evaluates each submission for literary as well as artistic quality and publishes the best selections.

If you are interested in submitting something for the 1992 edition of the **Sefer**, please send it to the University Relations office, marked "Sefer" by the end of the fall semester.

Original poetry, short stories, essays, black and white photos and black and white artwork are accepted for consideration.

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